

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 13

Exodus 3:1-12 *Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people... I have heard their cry.... Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them."* (vv.7-8a NRSV)

It's been almost nine months since I began serving a new congregation as Rector. In that time, I've had two parish secretaries quit. And the Assistant Parish Secretary can't help now, due to the demands of her full-time job. We reached out to several churches in our deanery and diocese, asking if any of their members might be interested in the job. Three potential candidates turned it down because of "too long a commute." Our church may be located in a rural area, but it's at the intersection of two major thoroughfares and is quite accessible. So, it's been too easy to feel sorry for myself and give in to despair.

Yet, today's Old Testament lesson reminds us that God *knows* our sufferings; He *hears* our cries; and *He alone* can deliver us from our troubles. Psalm 66:19 reminds us, "God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer." Thank You, Lord, for reminding me to trust You in this matter—whom else can we trust so completely?

Psalms 66, 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for the work of the Anglican Centre in Rome
Christchurch - (Aotearoa NZ & Polynesia) The Rt Revd Victoria Matthews

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Thomas, Glen Carbon, The Rt. Rev. Anthony Clavier,
Vicar; Igagala Parish, Tanzania: Rev. Samwel Zakayo; The Mission of Tariachi
, Santisima Cruz De Maravillas, Peru; Rev'd Ruben Mancilla; Rev'd Luis
Vizcarra.

Monday, May 14

Joshua 1:1-9 *I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.* (v.9)

God spoke these words to Joshua as the Israelites were about to enter and occupy a new land. Starting at a new parish in a different part of the country felt almost as daunting! It's taken months for me to learn everyone's names and stories, not to mention trying to come to terms with the cultural differences. That was particularly hard, since my husband—who's our organist/choir director—is originally from this area. Finally, I decided to own that I'm an outsider, and educate the congregation about my different background, instead of trying to fit in.

This may have been the hardest move of my life, but God reminds us in today's Old Testament lesson that we *can* be strong and courageous, because He is with us *wherever* we go. In fact, as I look back, the Lord's hand has been in every aspect of this long transition that began almost two years ago. Jesus reinforced this assurance in Matthew 28:20b, when he said, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Thank You, Lord!

Psalm 89:1-18; Ephesians 3:1-13; Matthew 8:5-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chubu - (Japan) The Rt Revd Peter Ichiro Shibusawa

DIOCESAN CYCLE: David L. Wells, Springfield, ordination to the Priesthood; St. James' Chapel, Marion, admitted to the Diocese, 1924; St. Michael's, O'Fallon, consecration of present church building, 2000.

Tuesday, May 15

1 Samuel 16:1-13a *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."* (v.7)

Today marks the 25th anniversary of when I met the man I would marry, one year later. At that time, I was dating a tall, dark and handsome guy who wore hand-tailored suits, drove a Mercedes, and charmed women everywhere. Behind the façade, he was a scoundrel, and I knew it—I just didn't want to admit it. Rick, on the other hand, was a medium-height cute guy, who wore jeans, drove a sensible Honda, and tended to be rather shy. But I was very attracted to him!

One day, as I sat in my kitchen fretting over which man to choose, God spoke to my heart the same message He gave Samuel about David: "Don't look at their appearances. Look on each man's character, because I look on the heart." When it came to character, there was no contest! And after 24 years of marriage, I couldn't be happier or more blessed by *God's* choice.

Psalms 97, 99, 100; Ephesians 3:14-21; Matthew 8:18-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Clogher - (Armagh, Ireland) The Rt Revd John McDowell

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Paul's, Alton, admitted to the Diocese of Illinois, 1837

Wednesday, May 16

Ephesians 4:1-16 *...we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.* (vv.15b-16)

Well, it would seem God has answered our prayers—at least temporarily—for some secretarial assistance. One of our choir members uttered in an offhand way, "If you need any help, let me know. I used to be the Parish Administrator at

[a nearby church].” I kept turning Suzi’s words over in my mind, and then prayerfully wrote her a note with the job description enclosed. After opening it at rehearsal, she told my husband (the Choir Director), “I’m sorry I ever said anything!” But then it seemed everyone she knew—fellow choir members, her sisters, her boyfriend—all told her they thought she should serve as our Interim Parish Secretary.

When I saw Suzi on Sunday, she said simply, “I’ll do it.” “You’ll do what?” I asked, clueless. “Be the Secretary until you can hire someone.” Wow! Her willingness will help to promote the growth of Christ’s Body in our parish, as we continue building ourselves up in love. And, I am still trusting God to send us good permanent help. *Please!*

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 8:28-34

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Cochin - (South India) The Rt Revd Baker Ninan Fenn, Coimbatore - The Rt Revd Timothy Ravinder

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Mark's, West Frankfort, admitted to the Diocese, 1923.

Thursday, May 17

Psalm 105:1-22 *Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his presence continually! Remember the wonderful works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.... (vv.4-5)*

“Seek” and “remember.” These two verbs were essential to the spiritual life of ancient Israel. Throughout the Old Testament, God’s people were continually exhorted to draw near to Him, and to remember all that He had done for them—most notably, their deliverance from bondage in Egypt through the Exodus. In our time, we, too, need to seek the Lord, and remember what He has done for us.

Throughout this difficult late-life transition involving a major move with many attendant losses and taking on a new parish, I’ve found this truly is the best prescription for the ‘blues’ that often accompany great change: Draw closer to God in prayer, worship, and Bible study; and try listing all the wonderful things He’s been doing in your life, the many gifts He has provided, and the ways He has wisely guided.

An old familiar hymn begins, “When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” *Indeed!*

Zechariah 4:1-14; Ephesians 4:17-32; Matthew 9:1-8

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Colombia - (XI, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Francisco Duque

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Sylvia L. Howard, Mt. Vernon.

Friday, May 18

Ephesians 5:1-20 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* (vv.1-2)

“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” This well-known saying is likely the most famous quotation by Charles Caleb Colton (1780-1832), an eccentric British cleric and writer. At the same time, the thought it expresses is found in today’s Epistle reading. The life-goal of every Christian is to become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ, and one way we can do that is to try to “imitate” him. St. Paul hints that part of how we can imitate Christ is to “walk in love, as Christ loved us.” (Episcopalians will recognize this familiar offertory sentence that often precedes the Holy Eucharist.)

Paul characterizes Christ-like love as sacrificial, meaning, “It’s not about me.” Easier said than done! Too often, I find that despite my best intentions, selfish motives crowd my well-meaning thoughts, particularly when I’m called on to do something I really don’t feel like. But then I ask myself, “Would I do this for Jesus?” The answer is “Yes,” and already I feel better. And many times, after having done my duty, I feel surprisingly blessed!

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 102; Matthew 9:9-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Connor - (Armagh, Ireland) The Rt Revd Alan Francis Abernethy

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, make us gentle and courteous in word and deed.

Saturday, May 19

Ezekiel 36:22-27 *A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* (v.26)

I freely admit that before I became a “born again” Christian, I was not a very loving person. I did not like or trust other people easily, tended to be irritable and resentful, and had a bad temper. Then, in 1987, God got ahold of me in a powerful way, and totally transformed my life. Very quickly, I began to notice the change in little ways, such as coming into the office the next morning and feeling kind toward a co-worker who had previously annoyed me enormously.

The biggest revelation came when, soon after my conversion, I went on a vacation to Florida and attended church with my mother. Previously, I had disliked both my Mom’s fellow church members and her social set. Yet, suddenly, I was passing the peace with genuine care, and chatting with her friends in a warm and lively way. I felt the love of God pouring out of me so hugely it was scary. God had truly given me a new heart and a new spirit! *Thank you, Lord!*

Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Ephesians 6:10-24; Matthew 9:18-26
ANGLICAN CYCLE: Cork, Cloyne & Ross - (Dublin, Ireland) The Rt Revd
William Paul Colton
DIOCESAN CYCLE: God, fill us with your grace, for the sake of your anointed
Son.

by The Rev. Dr. Nina George-Hacker, FHC

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*For the St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your
prayers this week:*

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Tim H. and family, Greg P., Linda
S., Phyllis P., Bill J., Ron G., Bill, Bobbi, Matt, Tori B., Dave M., Bill Mc., Linda
T., Dottie T., Roger H., Jack P., Zac & Alyssa & Carson C., Jenna A., Mary, James
T.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: George K., Alicia P.

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Alicia P., Barb
W., Daniel T., Ina R., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev.
Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt.
Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St.
Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of
the Altar